

December 14, 2018

The Honorable Ajit Pai, Chairman  
The Honorable Michael O’Rielly,  
Commissioner  
The Honorable Brendan Carr,  
Commissioner  
The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel,  
Commissioner

Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
455 12th Street, Southwest  
Washington, DC, 20544

Dear Chairman Pai,

I write to support the Comments of the Cable Act Preservation Alliance (“CAPA,” File ID 1114050901562) and to disapprove of the proposals and tentative conclusions set forth in the FCC’s September 25 Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making in Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 as Amended by the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992, MB Docket 05-311.

As a member of the board of RETN (the Regional Educational Television Network) in Burlington, Vermont, I understand and value the role of PEGs to work within and serve their local communities. RETN empowers local non-profits, educational institutions, and independent producers to get their stories seen and heard. Our community-oriented services include workshops, video production and multi-platform distribution. These services are so valuable to the public, many of whom would otherwise not have a voice.

Additionally, as the volunteer host of a low power community radio station, WBTV-LP, I’ve produced weekly content for ten years without receiving compensation of any kind. I do this to serve the local community, by providing literary content. (My show, Write the Book, features interviews with authors, poets, and people in the book industry.)

The local presence of these stations enables the residents in and near Burlington, Vermont to experience uniquely local programming about their community and local events and issues of interest to them. And that was the intent of the PEG provisions of the 1984 Cable Act – to enhance local voices, serve local community needs and interests, and strengthen our local democracy. By defining “franchise fee” in an overly broad fashion to include “in-kind” support, the FCC’s proposals will shift the fair balance between cable franchising authorities and cable operators and will force communities to choose between franchise fees and PEG channels – something that was never the intent of the Act.

I appreciate your consideration and hope you will protect PEG Access in our community and others by choosing not to adopt many of the proposals in the Further Notice.

Sincerely,

Shelagh Connor Shapiro, Board Member, RETN (retn.org)  
Host, Write the Book Radio Show, WBTV-LP